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AID /AID/LAC PASS TO MIKE MAGAN, DAA/LAC  
AID/LAC/SAM

STATE FOR INL

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [SOCI](#) [PTER](#) [PARM](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: GUIDANCE REQUESTED ON COLOMBIAN PRIVATE SECTOR  
SUPPORT FOR DEMOBILIZED EX-COMBATANTS

[11](#). (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph  
[16](#).

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Summary  
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[12](#). (U) There is high interest among the Colombian private sector in assisting the demobilization effort. In the last two weeks, the embassy has attended two meetings on the subject. One meeting on January 18 among senior representatives of more than twenty leading Colombian business and industry organizations, directors of Colombia's leading non-profit foundations, was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Planning, the World Bank and USAID/Colombia. On January 23, representatives of the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace organized a meeting with representatives of the Council of American Companies (CEA). In all cases, the private sector representatives expressed strong willingness to do their part. They also asked for improved communication with the government on demobilization and reincorporation programs, and information on their costs. Many U.S. companies, and Colombian companies doing business with the U.S., have said that a principal obstacle is uncertainty about Patriot Act implications (see action request). End Summary

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January 18 Meeting  
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[13](#). (U) Senior private sector representatives met on January 18 with GOC, World Bank, and USAID representatives to discuss private sector participation in reincorporation programs for demobilized ex-combatants. Participants included the Colombian Industry Association (ANDI), Confederation of Chambers of Commerce (Confecameras), National Business Organization (FENALCO), Colombian American Chamber of Commerce (COLAMCHAM), Council of American Enterprises (CEA), Fundacion Corona, Fundacion Carvajal and Fundacion Santo Domingo. The meeting built on a series of strategic analyses by USAID and others related to the prerequisites for effective private sector involvement in social/economic reinsertion programs and was an important breakthrough. The meetings highlighted the importance of a more effective effort on the part of the government to define more precisely private sector

protections, requirements, and program needs. The private sector participants expressed their commitment to assist reincorporation, in order to help restore long-term economic and social stability. A working group, led by a representative Juan Sebastian Betancur of the prominent ProAntioquia organization, will develop private sector suggestions and work to broaden further private sector participation.

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January 23 Meeting  
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¶4. (U) The January 23 meeting was similar. The Ministry of Interior and the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace presented to CEA members, representing U.S.-based multinationals, a list of 20 projects to employ up to 1400 demobilized, 500 displaced persons, and 415 small producers in conflict zones. The CEA representative expressed the members' readiness to assist, especially in developing sustainable opportunities for displaced and demobilized in the regions of their origin, but raised again the Patriot Act concerns we have heard in the past.

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Comment  
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¶5. (U) Concern about the Patriot Act implications for demobilization is not a new issue. It is impeding our ability to engage private resources in support of effective demobilization, and to stimulate sustainable private sector involvement, our preferred solution to employment generation. Initial GOC estimates, which we have reviewed, put the cost of processing and reinserting 15,000 beneficiaries (there already are 25,000) at about USD 171 million; our own target is that the private sector contribute at least USD 17 million of the total. There is

a high level of willingness within the business community. But there is also concern among U.S. companies and companies that do business with the U.S. (i.e., all big Colombian companies) regarding possible Patriot Act implications. Several companies have suspended assistance to reinsertion due to their lawyers' concern that they might be violating the Patriot Act prohibition against "material support for terrorists." Congress has now authorized use of official funds for the reinsertion program and many of the principal authors of the Patriot Act have confirmed to the embassy that the Act was not intended to impede programs designed to dismantle terror organizations.

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Action Requested  
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¶6. (U) Embassy requests on an urgent basis Department instructions on language we can provide businesses wishing to participate in the reinsertion program, as the USG already is doing, to reassure them that participation in this program will not risk violation of the Patriot Act. Alternatively, the Department press spokesman could express U.S. support for private sector participation in a well-structured demobilization program designed to dismantle the paramilitary terror group.

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